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UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 09 TEL AVIV 002307

SIPDIS

STATE FOR NEA, NEA/IPA, NEA/PPD

WHITE HOUSE FOR PRESS OFFICE, SIT ROOM  
NSC FOR NEA STAFF

SECDEF WASHDC FOR USDP/ASD-PA/ASD-ISA  
HQ USAF FOR XXXX  
DA WASHDC FOR SASA  
JOINT STAFF WASHDC FOR PA  
CDR USCENCOM MACDILL AFB FL FOR POLAD/USIA ADVISOR  
COMSOCEUR VAIHINGEN GE FOR PAO/POLAD  
COMSIXTHFLT FOR 019

JERUSALEM ALSO FOR ICD  
LONDON ALSO FOR HKANONA AND POL  
PARIS ALSO FOR POL  
ROME FOR MFO

E.O. 12958: N/A  
TAGS: [IS KMDR MEDIA REACTION REPORT](#)  
SUBJECT: ISRAEL MEDIA REACTION

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SUBJECTS COVERED IN THIS REPORT:  
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1. Mideast
2. US-Israel Relations

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Key stories in the media:  
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Leading media reported on President Bush's surprise visit to Baghdad on Tuesday. Maariv cited a Pew poll held in various European and Muslim countries, according to which French, German, Spanish, and Russian respondents said that the presence of US troops in Iraq represents a greater threat than the Iranian administration.

Ha'aretz reported that on Tuesday in London, PM Ehud Olmert told a group of British parliamentarians that Israel will never withdraw from the entire West Bank, because the pre-1967 borders are not defensible. Leading media reported that Olmert told the parliamentarians that on Monday, he authorized the IDF to dispatch to the PA 375 rifles to help establish the Palestinian presidential guard, which is supposed to bolster Abbas. Ha'aretz's website reported that PLO chief negotiator Saeb Erekat told the Palestinian daily Al-Ayyam that PA Chairman [President] Mahmoud Abbas has rejected an Israeli plan (first revealed by Ha'aretz on Tuesday) for a Palestinian state with provisional borders.

All media led with the violence in the Gaza Strip. Depending on the outlets, the media reported that seven or eight Palestinian civilians were killed along with three members of an Islamic Jihad cell in the IAF double missile attack on the northern outskirts of Gaza City. The van carrying the militants contained GRAD Katyusha rockets apparently intended to be fired into Israel. Maariv bannered: "Assassinations Preventing Katyusha Rocket Launching Into Israel." The media reported that shortly before the strike, Defense Minister Amir Peretz told reporters that Israel's restraint had ended. Media reported that Abbas called the attack "state terrorism." Israel Radio quoted former PA National Security Adviser Muhammad Dahlan as saying that Israel's actions in the Gaza Strip constituted "genocide." The station quoted State Department Spokesman Sean McCormack as saying: "It would appear that Israel was engaging in its right to defend itself. Of course, whenever it does so, we urge them to take into ... consideration the consequences of what it is that they do."

All media reported that the IDF investigation team examining the incident in which seven Palestinians were killed on a Gaza beach Friday concluded "beyond all doubt" that they were not hurt as a result of Israeli shelling. The head of the investigation, Maj. Meir Kalifi, was quoted as saying last night that it is likely the blast stemmed from a bomb placed by the Palestinians at the site or "some form of unexploded ordnance." This morning, Israel Radio quoted Kalifi as saying that the Palestinians

took care to remove the shrapnel from the bodies of the people killed in the incident and from the bodies of those who are being treated in Israel, so that it cannot be identified. IDF Chief of Staff Lt. Gen. Dan Halutz was quoted as saying that Israel continues to express its regrets over the incident, but that it does not accept responsibility for it. Israel Radio reported that the Hamas government placed responsibility for the attack on Israel, and that Abbas is demanding an international investigation on the matter. Israel Radio reported that UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan expressed doubts about the conclusions of the IDF investigation and that he is dispatching a representative to check the Palestinians' allegations in the matter.

Maariv quoted an unnamed senior Israeli defense establishment official assaying on Tuesday that one of Hamas's motives in its resumption of Qassam rocket launchings is Israel's policy that relentlessly acts to thwart any attempt by the new Palestinian government to succeed in its tasks. The official was quoted as saying that the Gaza beach disaster only accelerated Hamas's move.

Ha'aretz quoted Ahmed Yusef, Palestinian PM Ismail Haniyeh's political adviser, as saying in an interview with the newspaper that Hamas is prepared to offer a 50-year to 60-year cease-fire if Israel withdraws to the 1967 lines, and is leaving open the possibility of an Israeli-Palestinian peace agreement in the distant future. However, Yusef was quoted as saying that such a peace deal has no urgency.

The Jerusalem Post quoted Hamas officials as saying Tuesday that the bank accounts of Hamas ministers and legislators have been frozen by Palestinian banks in the West Bank and Gaza Strip at the request of Abbas's office. The Jerusalem Post quoted NGO officials as saying that international non-governmental organizations operating in Palestinian areas are increasingly worried that the Palestinian health system will collapse as funding runs out due to the international community's boycott of the Hamas government. Maariv cited a UNICEF report released on Tuesday, according to which one in three sick Palestinian newborns are dying in Gaza hospitals due to poor care and lack of basic medicines.

The Jerusalem Post printed an AP story quoting FM Tzipi Livni as saying after meeting with EU officials in Luxembourg that it was "too early" to know if the EU could rally aid to ease the economic and financial plight of Palestinians while staying clear of the PA.

Ha'aretz reported that the State Prosecutor's Office told the High Court of Justice this week that political considerations did not determine the route of the separation fence, but that its construction may have "political implications."

Ha'aretz reported that some 45 olive trees belonging to a Palestinian farmer from the West Bank village of Salem have been damaged, apparently by settlers, according to witnesses. Several media reported that 20 settlers were arrested in Hebron on Tuesday after they hurled stones and concrete blocks at policemen and IDF troops in the city's Avraham Avinu neighborhood. The clashes erupted when security forces arrived to secure the site where repair work was due to be carried out on a fence surrounding a Palestinian house in the neighborhood.

Ha'aretz and Maariv reported that the Knesset's Constitution, Law and Justice Committee approved the conditions for exceptions to the "Intifada law," clearing the way for some 2,000 Palestinians asking for Israeli compensation over damage caused during the conflict.

Israel Radio and other media reported that this morning, Hamas gunmen on Wednesday shot and moderately wounded PA Preventive Security Service chief Rifat Kulab in the Gaza town of Khan Yunis. The media reported that a Hamas militant was later shot and killed outside his home in the town in a possible retaliation.

Yediot reported that 12 carefully vetted Israeli and Palestinian children will soon leave for a summer camp in Finland, where they will found the joint children's parliament of Israel and the PA. The role of the child members of parliament will be to sit around a discussion table and raise new ideas for peace in the region. The initiator of the idea is the Children's United Parliament of the World (CUPW), an independent organization based in Finland. This is a non-

governmental organization, which currently includes 50 member states. Yediot reported that the Israeli Foreign Ministry has agreed to sponsor the project and quoted Foreign Ministry officials as saying that they attribute great importance to Israel's participation in the project of the children's parliament.

Maariv reported that four envelopes conspicuously marked "anthrax" and containing a substance suspected of being anthrax arrived at four addresses in Israel: a company in central Tel Aviv, a foreign embassy in Tel Aviv, a bank branch in Tel Aviv, and the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. Maariv reported that the Israeli defense establishment is checking who is behind this attempt to sow panic. Israel Radio reported that this morning, the Prime Minister's Office was evacuated due to a suspect envelope received in the mail, which was subsequently checked and did not contain explosives.

Maariv reported that the Jewish Agency, the Foreign Ministry, and the IDF have initiated an operation to return Israelis residing in Los Angeles to Israel. Maariv quoted a Foreign Ministry source as saying that many inductees joining the IDF in August will be Israelis who had left the country for the US with their parents.

Ha'aretz reported on a discussion among academics and activists in Washington regarding an expected USD 20-million donation to Georgetown University by Sheldon Adelson, allegedly the richest Jew in the world. The newspaper reported that Adelson is considering whether to donate the money to expand the University's Program for Jewish Civilization, part of its School of Foreign Service, into a full-fledged Center for Jewish Civilization. The move would involve hiring three more professors, and possibly a new building. Ha'aretz quoted a participant in the discussions as saying that the Jewish and Israeli presence at Georgetown, a Jesuit university that sends its graduates into the heart of the American political establishment, would reach a totally different level. Ha'aretz quoted the Rabbi of Georgetown University, Harold White, as saying that a Jewish center would balance out the University's Arab center.

Leading media reported that on Tuesday, the High Court of Justice ruled that Yigal Amir, who is serving a life sentence for assassinating then-PM Yitzhak Rabin in 1995, is allowed to artificially inseminate his partner Larissa Trimbovler. Media quoted Justice Ayala Procaccia as saying that like all prisoners, Amir has "basic human rights that were not appropriated from him when he went to prison." Ha'aretz reported that Peace Now Secretary-General Yariv Oppenheimer called the High Court decision "shocking and outrageous."

Yediot reported that a New York City commission found that one third of the city's Jews lives along or under the poverty line. The commission was cited as saying that those poor are ultra-Orthodox, elderly, immigrants from Russia, or illegal Israeli residents in the US.

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1. Mideast:  
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Summary:  
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Military correspondent Alex Fishman wrote on page one of mass-circulation, pluralist Yediot Aharonot: "The Hamas-led PA needed a tragedy [on the Gaza beach] like a breath of fresh air. This incident gave it a chance to extricate itself from the highly difficult situation it had become mired in."

Military correspondent Amos Harel and Palestinian affairs correspondent Avi Issacharoff wrote on page one of independent, left-leaning Ha'aretz: "The attempt to wage a political public relations battle to justify Israel's moves is doomed to failure."

Military correspondent Amir Rappaport wrote on page one of pluralist, popular Maariv: "The Israeli-Palestinian conflict has deteriorated into a civil war, but not in the conventional sense of the word. This is a war where the missiles and the Qassam rockets land in the heart of crowded population centers on both sides of the fence around the Gaza Strip, and as a result, innocent civilians pay a bloody price."

Senior columnist Haggai Huberman wrote in the editorial of nationalist, Orthodox Hatzofe: "Olmert is returning precisely to Clinton's proposal from six years ago, while not demanding Ehud Barak's ultimate condition:

the 'end of the conflict.'"

Block Quotes:

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I. " Hamas Found an Excuse "

Military correspondent Alex Fishman wrote on page one of mass-circulation, pluralist Yediot Aharonot (6/14): "Now we know that we're right. We were told that the army was all right, that we were not the ones who killed the Ghalia family, and we certainly agree. Even the Defense Minister (who is currently undergoing a process of militarization) agrees with the army that we are right. We all agree with each other, and everyone's conscience is as white as driven snow. So what? The defense establishment is playing PR games with itself. It needs this game to receive legitimacy from the public for the continuation of its security policy versus the Hamas-led PA in Gaza. So it has legitimacy. But where is the policy? The only policy that it has is, at best, is a reactive policy that ensures instability in the long term. What currently separates us between tense coexistence and deterioration and chaos is one Qassam rocket that will fall in the wrong spot, and not a coherent security doctrine from the participants of last night's [IDF] press conference. The tragedy of the Ghalia family did not lead to a search for justice or for culprits. From the outset, it served as a cynical instrument in the hands of the PA to speed up processes that were already on the ground in any case. Therefore, in the Palestinian view, Tuesday's press conference will not change a thing. Certainly not four days after the tragedy. The Ghalia family is already a myth that flows deep in the veins. The Hamas-led PA needed a tragedy of this sort like a breath of fresh air. This incident gave it a chance to extricate itself from the highly difficult situation it had become mired in."

II. " Preventing Terror or Killing Civilians "

Military correspondent Amos Harel and Palestinian affairs correspondent Avi Issacharoff wrote on page one of independent, left-leaning Ha'aretz (6/14): "The attempt to wage a political public relations battle to justify Israel's moves is doomed to failure. It appears that, in any case, the average observer in the West sees the post-disengagement conflict here as a bloodbath in which assassinations are indistinguishable from acts of revenge. Israel makes a distinction between its approach -- we attack terrorists and, as an incidental result, Palestinian civilians occasionally get hurt -- and the Palestinian terrorists' approach of targeting civilians. But this differentiation falls on apathetic ears.... [Even so,] the fact that Israeli attacks are taking place in the midst of the infighting between Hamas and Fatah has only increased the distress of the Gaza population. Despite the internal disputes, both groups agreed on the appropriate response to the Gaza casualties: No Fatah leader criticized the Hamas declaration that it is renewing suicide bombings."

III. " Civil War "

Military correspondent Amir Rappaport wrote on page one of pluralist, popular Maariv (6/14): "The Israeli-Palestinian conflict has deteriorated into a civil war, but not in the conventional sense of the word. This is a war where the missiles and the Qassam rockets land in the heart of crowded population centers on both sides of the fence around the Gaza Strip, and as a result, innocent civilians pay a bloody price.... As for Tuesday's [IDF] press conference, few people in the world will believe that Israel is not to blame, and instinctively it is also hard to believe the IDF's version, but the evidence indicates that it is almost certainly true. It should be assessed that the seven members of the Ghalia family were hit by a bomb that Hamas placed on the beach to target naval commandos who stage raids on Qassam rocket launching grounds. If Hamas's plan had succeeded, this would have recreated the 1997 naval commando disaster in Lebanon [in which 11 IDF soldiers lost their lives]."

IV. " Heading for the Next Palestinian Victory "

Senior columnist Haggai Huberman wrote in the editorial of nationalist, Orthodox Hatzofe (6/14): "On Tuesday, Ha'aretz published a report by Akiva Eldar that following regional and international opposition to unilateral Israeli moves, the [Israeli] government has begun to prepare an alternative plan, which will

effectively turn Prime Minister Ehud Olmert's realignment plan into a bilateral initiative, to which PA Chairman Mahmoud Abbas (Abu Mazen) would be a partner.... According to the plan, which has been prepared covertly, after the referendum Israel will offer Abu Mazen to reach an arrangement for establishing a Palestinian state that will include the Gaza Strip and 90 percent of Judea and Samaria [i.e. the West Bank].... If this proposal by Olmert is implemented, the Palestinians will be able to argue, and with complete justification from their viewpoint, that they won the war: Olmert is returning precisely to Clinton's proposal from six years ago, while not demanding Ehud Barak's ultimate condition: the 'end of the conflict.' The Palestinians will receive their main wish -- an independent Palestinian state on an absolute majority of the territory of Judea and Samaria, without providing minimal recompense in the form of halting the violence. The conflict will continue after the Israeli withdrawal as well, including all types of violence: Rocket fire, suicide bombers, and more."

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**12. US-Israel Relations:**  
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Summary:

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Columnist Yonatan Rosenblum wrote in pluralist, popular Maariv: "The American Jews' identification with Israel ... has dropped considerably."

Block Quotes:

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"No Longer a 'Chosen People'"

Columnist Yonatan Rosenblum wrote in pluralist, popular Maariv (6/14): "The June edition of [the US monthly] Commentary is entitled 'Whatever Happened to the Jewish People?' and describes the plummeting ethnic identity of America's Jews. The findings of sociologist Steven [M.] Cohen and historian Jack Wertheimer have important repercussions on Israel-Diaspora relations and on the future of non-ultra-Orthodox Jews in the world.... Unsurprisingly, the American Jews' identification with Israel, as well as contributions for Israel (among non-ultra-Orthodox), has dropped considerably.... Young Jews in Israel and America resemble each other in the insignificance they attribute to their Judaism -- only one element of identity among many others. As a result, the connection between them will dwindle increasingly.... The true tragedy is that most Jews are unaware that Judaism has a message, and that they are its carriers."

JONES